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News

"Your whole administration is being measured by your ability to fight inflation."
MLA Blake & Moderns Seminar

The theme of the 1975 "Blake and Moderns" seminar at the MLA annual meeting will be "Themes and Forms of a Continuity." Papers should be brief, 6-8 pages or 15 minutes; they may be expanded for later publication. Send papers and requests for information to Annette S. Levitt, Dept. of English, Temple Univ., Philadelphia, Pa. 19122 or Robert Bertholf, Dept. of English, Kent State Univ., Kent, Ohio 44202.

New Reproduction of America

The Newsletter has just finished printing a new reproduction of Blake's America, a Prophecy. We designed it chiefly for classroom use, as its features show. It is

1. America copy E, except for 2 plates from copy a* (proofs), plus the 4 cancelled plates, all from the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection of the Library of Congress;

2. black and white, reproduced with good halftone screens, 150 lines to the inch, on 9" x 12" text paper;

3. approximately the size of the original;

4. printed one plate per page. There are 2 reproductions of each plate, one on one side of the page, one on the other. One reproduction is a "dropout" halftone made from a high-contrast photograph, the other is a standard halftone made from a medium-contrast photograph. Each kind of reproduction has its particular virtues, and we are experimenting to find out which is more satisfactory;

5. unbound, loose sheets in an envelope, so that students can study sequences of plates without turning pages back and forth;

6. very inexpensive, $2.50 per copy, so that, for example, you can supplement the Blake section of an anthology of Romantic poetry--or even the Blake section of a broader anthology in a survey course--with one of Blake's works in illuminated printing, without having students spend too much money on books for the course.

If you would like to order America for your classes, please give your school bookstore our address (below). They will want to know that our discount is 20%, standard for most textbooks, and that our return policy is to refund money on all copies returned in good condition within a year.

Please understand that we are publishing the reproduction of America strictly as a service to teachers of Blake, with no intention of making a profit. We hope we can give you a good, cheap reproduction of America, good service, and personal attention to make up for the resources in personnel, money, and experience that commercial publishers have. We promise to do our best, but we hope you won't expect more than we can deliver.

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Allentuck on Fuseli

Marcia Allentuck, of the City University of New York and Wolfson College, Oxford, gave a series of lectures in March at the Tate Gallery, London, in connection with the Fuseli exhibition, mounted on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his death. The lectures, chiefly on Fuseli as an illustrator of British poets and Fuseli's images of women, all contained new material on Blake and his relation to Fuseli in these areas. They are part of a long study of Fuseli and Blake now being prepared for the press.

New Journal

Milton and the Romantics, edited by Luther L. Scales, Jr., is a new periodical of notes and essays on relationships among Milton and the Romantics now asking for correspondence and contributions. Address inquiries to the editor at the Dept. of English, Journalism, and Philosophy, Georgia Southern College, Statesboro, Ga. 30458.
Minute Particulars
By David V. Erdman

At the moment the chances of a second printing of The Notebook do not seem great, but notice of any errata besides the following will be gratefully received.

The Erratum inserted on p. 105 at the last moment implies corrections on pages [xv], 29 (note 1), 51, 76, 86-7. The 12th line in the Erratum should read: "which I did not mean to attribute." Page 9, footnote 2: Wynne's middle name should be given as Huddleston (also in Index, p. 105). Dr. Judith Wardle supplies this correction, and the information that the copy I saw of Chosco Emblems lacking No. 2 must be defective; it continues into the 6th edition at least. In the second, only Emblem 27 is redesigned. But Wardle observes that in Bunyan's version, in Emblem 22 of Divine Emblems, the boy is trying to catch the butterfly in his hat.

Page 29, Emblem 60, line 3: "turning Earth" should read "watching Bard." Page 46, Table I.B.: add: "62a. Portrait head of Catherine Blake." Page 47, line 1: "and boy, with pipe" should read "and piper." On pages 49 and 50, "57a,b" and "57b" should read "51" etc. On page 53, end of Table I, "80a (deriving from 16a)" should be: "... from 16f."

Note (c) on facsimile page [N21] should refer to Table I G (not H). Note on [N 82] should read: "Portrait of Catherine Blake." Sir Geoffrey Keynes tells me (I can't locate the reference, though) that Gilchrist assumed this to be a picture of Mrs. Blake; Keynes has now acquired a pencil portrait sketch by George Cumberland that seems to confirm the identification.

[N 115 transcript] The revision of 3b:3 said to be in italics, for grey ink, is mistakenly in roman type in the transcript. Page [67] reference to the Fifth Printing of The Poetry and Prose (1973) as containing corrections was optimistic. Doubleday has thrice reprinted in haste, with no corrections. A corrected edition, with much revision of the textual notes, still lies on the publisher's desk.

Pages 71-72, Poem 78 note. My purportedly "completely tidy hypothesis," placing the date "before or during early 1809," was very untidy, I realize. Indeed I have no plausible hypothesis to explain how I overlooked crucial evidence, the death date of Schiavonetti (Assassinetti) whose passing (7 June 1810) is lamented in the fair copy on N 22 (as my own note in the Doubleday Blake, p. 732, specifies) and in Poem 79. Now poem 79 ("Was I angry with Hayley," N 23) unmistakably precedes the portion of PA written on page 23. Msc 13 thus belongs before poem 78 in my Table II, pp. 56-57, as does Msc 15. The date of much of PA must then be after June 1810, though some parts of it preceded May 1810. The basic error here was to assume that poems 78-131 and PA were mostly written in 1809; I had insufficiently digested the evidence that Blake's Exhibition was kept open through most of 1810 (see p. 13). Page 95, line 14 in the transcript should read "Accusations." Page [97], "watermark" should read "countermark." Page [99], Index, should read "Hes a Blockhead who wants a proof... etc. Page 105, Index, Wynne's middle name should be corrected, as above; page numbers after Young, Edward, should read "25" not 26; "51" not 41.

P.S.: The errata and missing cross-references noted in Robert Essick's review in Blake Newsletter 32 (pp. 134-35) are helpful. But his reading of the picture of Emblem 13 is doubtful, and the problem of the coffin in Emblem 14 is simply that half of it must be presumed to be outside the picture area.

The initial response to The Illuminated Blake has been so vigorous that a second printing is in the press (June 1975) and a British edition (by Oxford University Press) has been published. The Oxford edition repairs most of the errors listed below; I trust the second Anchor does so too—but have not been shown proofs.

Cheap printing had the virtue of keeping a low price on the paperback, but haste in production and the bypassing of page or plate proofs resulted in needless errors. Some of the plates are much too pale, not always the fault of the photographs supplied. In some important details fail to appear; for three such plates remedial photographs have been supplied for the Oxford and 2nd Anchor printings. The border of Jerusalem IE somehow disappeared altogether; an attempt to restore it in the Oxford edition misfired somehow; perhaps it will appear in the second Anchor.

All pages over seven inches tall had to be reduced to that height; everything else was to be printed in its exact size. But the printers ignored the designer's instructions, and the result was shrunken plates for most of America and Jerusalem. Worst of all, the text pages of The Song of Los were shrunken within artificial borders, while the full-picture pages were kept to the maximum dimensions, unbordered. Happily, this gross distortion has been corrected.

Four of the Milton pages, intended for exact size, were shrunken: M'20 by almost an inch; M 31 by 3/16", M 35 by 5/16", M 38 by 1/4". But M 3 was made an inch too tall, and Brittan 19 3/4" too tall. These major discrepancies have been remedied, several slighter ones not.
The following typographical errors or omissions have been corrected. On p. 15, column 1, line 2, "effect" should be "affect." On p. 15, add at end of first paragraph: "Red* means red in *some* copies." On p. 26, the last paragraph should read: "... Night Thoughts 264..." On p. 42, paragraph 3, line 4, "carries" should read "carries." On p. 59, line 15, "between Adam..." should read "behind Adam..." On p. 126, first column, second paragraph, line 3, "Balthazar's" should read "Belshazzar's." The following words are spelled incorrectly: p. 53, line 6: Additory; p. 57, line 5: lullaby; p. 113, line 14: directly. Plate numbers for copy C of Milton should be corrected, on p. 219 to C2, on p. 227 to C8* [a five-pointed star], on p. 236 to C17, and on p. 251 to C32*. In the index, the j 1 border (though still invisible) should be cited under "manacles" and "thorns."

The following errors have been discovered too late for correction in the reprints. On p. 99 the second "text" should read "next"; the last word on p. 162 should be "dance"; words misspelled are "dispell" on p. 154, line 25; "Daughter" on p. 174, line 19; "wholly" on p. 342, line 22; "Stukeley" on p. 355, line 7. On p. 182 the second row of plate numbers for Urizen copy C should read: 24, 26, 28; the concluding sequence for copy A needs this mending: ... 17 21? 14 ... (but 19 after 20 won't do) ... (Perhaps 9... after 16; 33 could go anywhere between 20 and 26.) On page 206 the revised printings have this added paragraph:

The red scarf, a sort of sun, appears also in C and A. Tiriel has outstretched arms, with palms open, in CAG. There is a separate plate in which only Uthra appears. (Reported by W. J. T. Mitchell.)

Finally, the following fresh suggestions for additions to the commentary seem worth giving here. On the Ahania frontispiece (p. 211), Geoffrey Keynes notes, in his facsimile edition, that Urizen, after "stretching his awful hand" (2:31), contemplates crushing Ahania. Susan Fox notes that in Milton 19 (p. 235) one tip of Los's branching arms reaches Milton's left tarsus, while in 46 (p. 262) the serpen tail does not quite reach it. In Milton 21 (p. 237) I now think that the fourth marginal figure from the top represents Catherine Blake, since she is skirted like the bottom figure in 22, where the action is analogous to that in Jerusalem 36. Fox also suggests that the lightning in Milton 33 (p. 249) represents that of Ololon's descent; this seems probable, though we then need new identifications, perhaps, for the touching figures in the center. Michael Tolley notes that on p. 271 the description of the revised "Fire" figure should include horns growing on his head. They are clearly there, but I had never noticed them.

On page 335, to forestall interpretative speculation, it should be remarked that the fragmenting of the worm shape under "earth-Worm are" (37) was caused byridges in the copper made by the word "LONDON" in the plate-maker's stamp. Tiriel: Two Corrected First Readings

By Francis Wood Metcalf

The following corrections of the Tiriel transcript will be incorporated in the next revised printing of David Erdman's Doubleday text.

1. "To raise his dark & burning visage thro the cleaving [world del] ground."

The deleted word is not "world," but "earth." The cause for the unanimous misreading by editors is probably the d-like form of the last of the deleting loops. However, this loop cannot be a d because it is preceded by two vertical strokes where a d would be in "world." Nor can these strokes be considered d in "world": ninety-two percent (336 of 363) of the serifs of word-ending d curve leftward in the poem as a whole; all of them (34) do so in this section. Either there is a very rare occurrence here of a straight d serif, or the deleted word is not "world."

On the positive side, and bearing in mind the narrow range of synonyms for "ground," the deleted word looks more like "earth" than "world" under the deleting loops. Michael Tolley, who very generously agreed to examine the manuscript in the British Museum, reports that the original's initial letter looks like e but not o. In addition, the vertical strokes are similar to those of the th in "Earth" of the preceding line (246), and to those of the many other th's in the surrounding text. Only the right-most portion of the crossing stroke of t, crossing h as well, is clear of the loops, and it is quite faint. But many similar strokes are equally faint, and two nearby th's have no crossing strokes at all: "the" in 243 and "doth" in 244.

The terminal hump of h is not visible, but if it were as short and flat as the one in "earth" of 258, it would be obscured by the last deleting loop. Finally, from a semantic standpoint the deleted word must be "earth." "Earth" and "ground," the replacement, are natural synonyms; "world" and "ground" are not.

2. The sequence of vicissitudes in 385-86 is recorded erroneously in Damon's Dictionary: "Such was Tiriel, [hypocrisy, the idiot's wisdom & the wise man's folly, del] compell'd..." (p. 406). Alone among editors, Bentley notes that "is" in 385 was changed to "was," but gives no evidence of understanding the full sequence of revision in these lines: that when "is" became "was," "Tiriel" was affixed to the line-end, and the next line was cancelled.

Originally, 385 ended with "Such is," the sense continuing in the next line: "Such is / Hypocrisy the idiot's wisdom & the wise man's folly." Since 386 ends the page we can speculate that the sense ran on to perhaps an entirely different conclusion on a now-lost recto. But at some point Blake decided against an abstract sermon on hypo-
crisy and in favor of the case of the particular hypocrite; at which time he saw that he could maintain continuity and therefore save the verso by revising 385, deleting 386, and continuing on the present recto. Thus "Such is / Hypocrisy . . ." became "Such was Tiriel / Compell'd . . .".

It might be objected that "Tiriel" need not have been added to 385 when 386 was cancelled; in other words, that "Hypocrisy" could be taken as an appositive to "Tiriel," as Damon takes it. But Damon's construction contains a double appositive, which besides sounding tortured and inept, does not sound like Blake, who was sparing of appositives. The correction offered above mollifies this stylistic Medusa, accounts for the changing of "is" to "was," and explains the bad grammar of "Such was Tiriel Compell'd" by supposing an originally correct "Such is Hypocrisy."

1 G. E. Bentley, Jr.'s facsimile edition of Tiriel (Oxford, 1967), line 247. All line references are to this edition.

2 A similar strategy lay behind the wholesale cancellation of 364-74, which marks a shift from a panoramic to a developmental treatment of Urizenic depravity. Observe in 364-69 the fourfold analysis of man in reptile form: dragon, viper, plague serpent, and python. The python of 369 seems to represent the class of Kings and Judges.

Blake in the Provinces
By Geoffrey Keynes

A correspondent has drawn my attention to a reference to Blake in A Century of Birmingham Life, Birmingham, 1868, vol. II, pp. 246-7. This recorded a paragraph on Blake published in Arris's Birmingham Gazette on Monday, 28 July 1806. Mr. W. A. Taylor, City Librarian, has kindly sent me xerox copies of the relevant parts of the issue of the newspaper for this date, which shows that the following advertisement was published:

PROSPECTUS OF
A NEW and elegant Edition of BLAKE'S GRAVE.
Abridged with notes by the late William Blake and with the_a 

dedication with the consent of the Trustees of the Northern Libraries.
The Work will be printed by Ti. Brown, 66, High Street, Birmingham, in Imperial Quarto.
The Price to Subscribers will be two Guineas; one Guinea to be paid at the Time of Solicitation, and the Remainder on Delivery of the Work. The Price will be considerably advanced to Non-Subscribers.
Mr. J. Knox and Lloyd, Birmingham, will give the Address of the Author of the Work, who will return the original Drawings and Specimens of the Style of Engraving.
The Work has been considered with the Subscriptions and Patrons of the Northern Libraries.

1. Sir W. A. Taylor, K.B.E., President of the Royal Academy. 
2. Sir W. A. Taylor, K.B.E., President of the Royal Academy. 
3. Sir W. A. Taylor, K.B.E., President of the Royal Academy. 
4. Sir W. A. Taylor, K.B.E., President of the Royal Academy. 
5. Sir W. A. Taylor, K.B.E., President of the Royal Academy. 
6. Sir W. A. Taylor, K.B.E., President of the Royal Academy. 
7. Sir W. A. Taylor, K.B.E., President of the Royal Academy. 
8. Sir W. A. Taylor, K.B.E., President of the Royal Academy.

Above: lines from the manuscript of Tiriel
On another part of the same sheet was a paragraph of criticism:

FINE ARTS--We have never experienced greater satisfaction than is announced to our readers, that there are now in this town, for the inspection of the lovers of the fine arts, some most beautiful designs intended to illustrate a new and elegant edition of Blair's Grave. At a period when the labours of the pencil are almost wholly directed to the production of portraits, they who dare soar in the sublime regions of fancy surely claim the patronage of men of taste and discernment; and the specimens here alluded to may, with the strictest adherence to truth, be ranked among the most vigorous and classical productions of the present age.

I do not know of any other exhibition of Blake's work having taken place anywhere outside London at this early date. The list of subscribers printed in the book gives the names of sixty-six subscribers in Birmingham and the vicinity. The list suggests that the exhibition may have been circulated to other large centres such as Liverpool, Leeds, Wakefield, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Bristol and Edinburgh.

"Poor Robin" & Blake's "The Blossom"
By Warren U. Ober

In one of his notes on "The Cool World of Samuel Taylor Coleridge" (The Wordsworth Circle, 5 [Winter 1974], 61) P. M. Zall quotes part of a bawdy ballad recollected by Francis Place, "the radical tailor of Charing Cross":

One night as I came from the play
I met a fair maid by the way
She had rosy cheeks and a dimpled chin
And a hole to put poor Robin in.

A bed and blanket have I got ["I have got" in Zall's source]
A dish a Kettle and a pot
Besides a charming pretty thing
A hole to put poor Robin in.

Though the context in which the ballad is quoted in part in Professor Zall's source (Place, Autobiography, ed. Mary Thale [Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1972], p. 58n.) does not make clear the precise date of the ballad, the evidence provided by the editor tends to confirm Zall's suggestion: "about 1780." Place, who was born in 1771, is quoted as saying that he listened to such songs at a social gathering "when a boy of 10 years of age." Certainly it is clear that the song was very popular, since Place says of it and others (p. 58n.), "There is not one of them that I have not myself heard sung in the streets."

This popular song of the London streets is of especial interest in that it may shed some light on a long-standing problem of interpretation involving Blake's "The Blossom," one of his Songs of Innocence (1789):

Merry Merry Sparrow
Under leaves so green
A happy Blossom
Sees you swift as arrow
Seek your cradle narrow
Near my Bosom.

Pretty Pretty Robin
Under leaves so green
A happy Blossom
Hears you sobbing sobbing
Pretty Pretty Robin
Near my Bosom.

A popular reading of the poem is that of Joseph H. Wicksteed (Blake's Innocence and Experience [London: Dent, 1928], p. 126): "The birds are the male element as seen by the maiden. They represent the whole range of the lover's love, from the winged thought to the accomplished act."

Geoffrey Keynes (Songs of Innocence and of Experience [London: Hart-Davis, 1967], p. 11 commentary) supports Wicksteed's interpretation: "The sparrow 'swift as arrow' is a phallic symbol seeking satisfaction in the blossom of the maiden's bosom. The robin sob's perhaps with the happiness of experience." Similarly, D. G. Gillham (Blake's Contrary States [Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1966], pp. 164-65) sees the subject of the poem as being sexual intercourse. "The blossom, herself, despite her tenderness," Gillham says, "is rather disengaged, and tends to be aware of the male sexual organ almost as a sort of pet." E. D. Hirsch, Jr., however, comments on "The Blossom" (Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to Blake [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964], p. 181) as follows: "This is the most difficult poem in the Songs of Innocence. The only full-dress explication I know of is by Wicksteed, whose theory that the poem symbolizes love and sexual intercourse I cannot accept." And W. H. Stevenson rather stiffly says (The Poems of William Blake, ed. Stevenson [London: Longman, 1971], p. 64): "The extreme simplicity of this poem has puzzled interpreters, who have had to delve deep for its symbolism. It is more than doubtful that B. would embody such symbolism so deeply in a book planned for children. . . ."

The suggestion that the ballad recalled by Francis Place is a part of the context within which "The Blossom" was created, if not an actual source for it, should shock no one familiar with the scatology and robust satire of An Island in the Moon, in the manuscript of which appear the "Nurse's Song," "The Little Boy Lost," and "Holy Thursday" of the later Songs of Innocence. The facts that in the London street song recollected by Place the penis is called Robin and that Blake could reasonably have been expected to know the song and
to have assumed that his audience was aware of it are, I believe, evidence in support of Wicksteed's reading of "The Blossom." Other less significant supporting details are the repetition of the word "pretty," the substitution of "blossom" for "rosy cheeks and dimpled chin," and the fact that "poor" Robin becomes the "sobbing" Robin of Blake's poem. Finally, the OED records a use of the phrase "merry-bout" in the *Newgate Calendar* of 1780 as slang for "an act of sexual intercourse." Hence the appropriateness of Blake's "merry, merry sparrow."

If this widely known street song was in fact in Blake's mind when he composed "The Blossom" and in the minds of Blake's readers as well, perhaps the poem is more complex and ironic than Stevenson is prepared to admit, even if it was destined to appear "in a book planned for children."

An Early Allusion to Blake
By G. P. Tyson

Among William Blake's first engravings for the booksellers was his head of Albrecht von Haller (1708-1777), which was used as a frontispiece for Thomas Henry's *Memoirs of Albert de Haller, M.D.* (1783). Of Henry's extant letters there is one at the Bodleian to his bookseller, Joseph Johnson, containing a brief allusion to Blake; the letter (Ms. Engl. theol. c.50, f. 182) is dated 13 April 1783, making it one of the earliest known references to the engraver.

Manchester

Dear Sir

The Author of the Sermons which come to you with this letter is a very worthy Clergyman, and the particular Friend of all your Friends here. You will agree with me that the Discourse is an excellent one, and written in a good cause. It will be of some importance to him to have it more known, and you are desired to advertise it in some of the papers and, if you can, introduce it to the London [Unitarian] Association. You will oblige us all by attending to it, and forwarding the Sale. I hope the Magnesia [Alba] arrived—There had been some accident to one of the Wagons which delayed it—

Pray hasten the Head of Haller—The Book is finished, and very neat, and the Season is advancing rapidly. The heads might come in Clerk's parcel, or in Newton's. The One deals with Bew, the other with Rivington—

A Possible Source for "Thel's Motto"
By Michael Ferber

Several Biblical sources have been offered for the second half of Thel's mysterious "motto:

Can Wisdom be put in a silver rod? Or Love in a golden bowl?

Northrop Frye (Fearful Symmetry, p. 446, n. 55) connects the golden bowl with the golden cup of Babylon mentioned in Jeremiah 51.7 and Revelation 17.4. He also cites Ecclesiastes 12.6 as a source of both lines: "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken . . ." Though this verse is almost as cryptic as the "motto" itself, it is no doubt generally relevant to Thel, for in its context it seems to refer to the death of the body, which Thel shrinks from at the end of the poem. But the context has little about love or wisdom, and of course a cord is not a rod.


But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.
The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

The appropriateness of this passage to the themes of Thal hardly needs pointing out, but it is equally obvious that there is neither rod nor bowl here, and nothing about love.

I propose another candidate, somewhat better than these though far from perfect, Hebrews 9.3-4:

And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.

The immediate context is a disparaging account of the "worldly sanctuary" of the old covenant. The Epistle as a whole stresses the great change that has come with Christ: as a new and greater high priest he has replaced the old material sanctuary with a new spiritual one, and whereas the old high priest entered the Holy of Holies alone and once a year, Christ has entered it once and for all and we enter it with Him.

The golden pot is described in Exodus 16.32-34, where Aaron the high priest at Moses' command puts an omer full of manna into a pot and lays it up "before the Testimony" (covenant) in the ark. The manna had been sent by God daily as a sign of His grace and love for the Israelites. It would spoil after one day (except on the Sabbath) so there was no point in hoarding it. A Blakean might say it is an error to try to gather up God's love and preserve it in a "holy" place. The quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth like manna from heaven, and cannot be stored in pots.

The rod of Aaron is described in Numbers 17.1-11. Of the twelve rods representing the twelve tribes only Aaron's blossomed, thereby proving to dissenters that God had indeed chosen Aaron to be high priest with sole privilege of entering the Holy of Holies. Aaron's authority was thus based on supernatural power and privilege, and not, as one might argue such authority should be, on spiritual wisdom. And of course it was the Aaronic priesthood that Christ came to replace (see Hebrews 7.11-17).

Just as the ancient priests wrongly tried to consolidate and preserve spirit and selfishly restrict access to it, so Thel wrongly seeks to consolidate and preserve herself, as it were, and rejects love and generosity for their threat to her selfhood.

That the passage from Hebrews lies behind the "motto" gains support from the reference in Thel to the "morning manna" that the Lilly will receive in eternity. That in turn refers to the "hidden manna" of Revelation 2.17, the manna hidden in the ark that Christ, the new high priest, will pass out to all who are faithful to Him.

A Significant New Blakean Fragment
By Donald H. Reiman

Though Blake's Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience are familiar to all students above the age at which they first visit the zoo, his fragmentary Songs of Education--not yet found in the collected editions of Blake's works--are less well known. I have known respected Blake scholars, in fact, who were appallingly ignorant of this seminal work.

Originally intended for a volume in William and Mary Jane Godwin's Juvenile Library, Songs of Education was left unfinished when Blake became afflicted by extreme gastric indigestion while reading at the British Museum. His only comment on the work occurs in Barron Field's report of the conversation between Blake and Leigh Hunt at Horsemonger Lane Gaol. When asked by either Hunt or Thomas Massa Alsager (Field is uncertain which) what place Songs of Education would have occupied in his oeuvre, Blake replied: "I cannot tell how the whole might have developed; certain I am, however, that Education, while not consonant with Experience, destroys Innocence."

Heretofore scholars have been handicapped by having available only brief, disconnected fragments of Songs of Education--couplets and quatrains that Blake composed on the letter-covers of Godwin's appeals for money. Recently, however, there has come into my possession an extended passage from the work that incorporates some of the earlier fragments and suggests the tone and purpose, if not the full scope and shape, of the projected volume. While browsing in a bookshop near Exit 10 of the New York State Thruway, I was fortunate enough to discover (and purchase for thirty-five cents) a copy of Swedenborg's Fruiter of Flagon, the excessively rare London edition of 1791 printed by W. E. Inkell for the New Church. Imagine my joy when I discovered that its title page bore the inscription, in a clearly identifiable hand, "WM Blake/ Poet and Painter/ 1807" and that between the otherwise-unrecorded half-title and the title page was a leaf--artistically sewn in with pastel thread--containing the following lines from Blake's Songs of Education:

Then woke the spirit of bold William Blake--
Word-lover, foe of orthodoxies' kind;
He swept across two school-infested lands
To chastise all self-satisfied of mind.

Not one to FOSTER DAMONS for a fee,
With rusty KROE BER thumping their stout KEYNES
He drove them to the SHOR; ERE they could flee,
A voice boomed out, inflicting deeper pains:
Nobodaddy: Through the Bottomless Pit, Darkly
By L. Edwin Folsom

The names of Blake's poetic characters are, of course, vast in their associations, often incorporating puns, conflations and anagrams based upon key words or Biblical, classical, and historical characters. Nobodaddy, the farting, belching "Father of Jealousy" (E 462) who hides himself in clouds and loves "hanging & drawing & quartering / Every bit as well as war & slaughtering," (E 490) has received general critical agreement as to the significance of his name. "Old daddy Nobody" and "Nobody's daddy" seem logical expansions of the compact name of this destructive divinity who appears in several of the Notebook poems and who manifests himself elsewhere as Urizen, Winter, the Will, and the Old Testament God. But "Nobodaddy," it should be noted, is also a close anagram of the name of a character who appears in two of Blake's favorite Biblical books, Job and Revelation: Abaddon (Hebrew for "destruction"), Anagrammatized, "Abaddon" becomes "Nobadad." He is "the angel of the bottomless pit" who appears in Revelation 9:11 and is mentioned in Job 26:6.

Like Blake's Nobodaddy, who hides himself in clouds and thrives in "darkness & obscurity," (E 462) Abaddon exists, too, in an obscure beclouded place; when an angel of the apocalypse opens the shaft of Abaddon's realm, there "arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (Rev. 9:2).

Abaddon is the king of the locusts that are released during the apocalypse in order to torture but not to kill "those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (Rev. 9:4). Old Nobodaddy, who is (with his love of "hanging & drawing & quartering . . . war & slaughtering"), like Abaddon, the personification of destruction, reflects nonetheless Abaddon's less than humane decision to torture but not to kill: "To kill the people I am loth," (E 490) swears Nobodaddy solemnly and hypocritically. And in his satiric verse, "When Klopstock England Defied" (E 491), Blake portrays Nobodaddy ordering a miniature apocalypse, with Blake himself commanded by Nobodaddy to inflict torture but not death on the infidel Klopstock. As the smoke rising from Abaddon's bottomless pit accompanies the release of the locusts, Nobodaddy's "Fart[ing] & Belch[ing] & cough[ing]" (1. 4) bring on "a ninefold yell" from "all the devils that were in hell" (11. 13-14), and the moon "blush[es] scarlet red" (1. 11) in a parody of "the moon [becoming] as blood" (Rev. 6:12) when the sixth seal is opened. No seal is opened in Blake's poem, however; rather, Klopstock's bowels are sealed shut as Blake obeys Nobodaddy and inflicts "nine fold pain" (1. 28) on the hapless German poet who "defied" England by attempting to carry on Milton's legacy in German, reason enough to be fit, like those in Revelation, for torture. Klopstock's plight—not to be relieved until "the last trumpet it was farted" (1. 20)—can be likened to that of the men tortured by the locusts, who, in their pain, "shall . . . seek death, and shall not find it." (Rev. 9:6).

Nobodaddy, however, ultimately withdraws his sadistic, destructive orders and by the end of the poem Blake characteristically begins to pity Klopstock: "From pity then he redend round / And the Spell removed unwound" (11. 29-30).

Abaddon, then, the embodiment of destruction, sadistic torturer of any man who failed to gain God's favor, cloud-obscured and smoke-hidden angel of the bottomless pit, is an ideal Biblical model for Blake's Nobodaddy, whose name reflects Abaddon's in a scrambled, "dark and obscure" way.

1. I have edited the fragment heuristically according to the following principles: (1) all substantive features of the text have been transcribed literally; (2) all accidental features have been emended to conform to my notion of what constitutes communicative English.


4. Abaddon also appears as a place of destruction in Psalms 88:11 and in Proverbs 15:11. In the King James Version, Abaddon is translated into "destruction" in the passages in Job, Psalms, and Proverbs, but remains in the Hebrew form "Abaddon" in Revelation. Revelation 9:11 tells us that the "name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Appollyon." Blake, of course, chooses to work with the Hebrew name.
Blake's Beulah & Beulah Hill, Surrey
By Eileen Sanzo

Much is written concerning Blake's nature myth of Beulah, but one important fact which has as yet not been pointed out, is that there is an actual Beulah Hill in Surrey—in Blake's day, located in the countryside adjoining London; today, considered part of the city itself. If the mythical Golgonooza is the "spiritual Four-fold London / eternal" and Jerusalem can be identified also with London, it may be that the mythical, naturally beautiful Beulah also has a parallel in Blake's concrete experience of the suburbs and bordering countryside of the city he lived in.

The actual Beulah Hill, Surrey, is just north of Norwood, which Blake refers to frequently as a kind of southern boundary to greater London. Roche's Map of 1745 of London and its environs transcribes the spot as Bewley's Farms and Bewley's Woods. The English Place-Name Society records that the name for the spot is ancient, taking the form of Bewley in 1493, Beaulieu Hill and Bulay Hill in 1823, and Beaulah Spa in 1836. They write: "The forms are late, but it may be that the name is ... of post-Conquest origin, from OFr Be(au) Li(e)eu, beautiful spot." The present-day spelling of Beulah Hill, Surrey seems to indicate that although the spellings were different (eighteenth century and early nineteenth century spellings varied in general), the pronunciation of "Beaulieu" or "Bulay" was like that of Blake's "Beulah." The meaning of the names of the actual locality was the same as the connoted meaning of the Biblical Beulah, as developed by Bunyan—a naturally beautiful paradise.

The actual Beulah Hill may have inspired an identification between Blake's Beulah and the country south of London. This may be indicated by Blake's phrase—"Thames and Medway, rivers of Beulah" (J 4.34); the tributaries of the Thames and Medway rivers watered Surrey. That Beulah was country adjoining the city seems indicated by the lines about—

... the Sleeping Man
Who, stretch'd on Albion's rocks, reposes
amidst his Twenty-eight
Cities, where Beulah lovely terminates in the
hills and valleys of Albion.
(J 85.24-26)

Norwood may well have been one of Blake's destinations on his walks south of London, and the sleep of Beulah may have occurred literally (as well as in the many ways already commented upon, imaginatively) when he rested. We know that Blake took long walks both in London and out into the country surrounding it because he tells us so in his poetry. Thus the mythical Beulah, with its allusions to Scripture and John Bunyan, may have a special basis in fact and a parallel with Blake's personal experience of London and its countryside. If Jerusalem can be imaginatively identified with London, Palestinian Beulah may also have been identified by him with the London countryside of Beulah Hill, Surrey.

The Influence of Wynne's Emblems on Blake
By Judith Wardle

In a footnote on page 9 of the D. V. Erdman and D. K. Moore edition of Blake's Notebook (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), reference is made to Wynne's Choice Emblems Natural, Historical, Fabulous, Moral and Divine, For the Improvement and Pastime of Youth ... (London: Printed for George Riley, 1772) as a possible influence upon Blake. Some of the details in this note are inaccurate. John Wynne's second name was Huddlestone, not Middleton. Emblem 2 is not dropped from later editions of the work. It appears in the 2nd edition, 1775 (British Museum), not in the first. The only later editions I have seen are the 6th, 1788 and 7th, 1792 (Cambridge University Library), and it is also in them. As for other changes between the 1st and 2nd editions: the frontispiece is indeed different. Emblems 12 and 13 are dropped and others substituted, number 47 goes to the end as 53 and 47-52 are new. The only plate which has been re-engraved, as far as I can tell, is Emblem 27, "Of Vain Pursuits." (All have the addition of a bow of ribbon on top, but that is unimportant.) The differences between the 1772 and 1775 plates of Emblem 27 are as follows: the picture has been reversed, the shape of trees and bushes has been changed, the house lacks its chimney, and the area of the boy's shadow has decreased. But none of these seem to me to matter in regard to the question of the emblem's influence upon Emblem 4 of the Notebook.

I wish now to consider the question of whether Wynne's emblems did influence Blake's, and if so which edition. I do not think there is any evidence for choosing one edition rather than another, from the 1st to 6th (the 7th being too late). All the
embrongs which may have influenced Blake appear in all the editions I have seen, and since the 6th has more emblems than the 2nd but has not deleted any, I suppose that the relevant emblems are to be found in the intervening editions. The comment on the 1772 frontispiece in Erdman's footnote reads: "The frontispiece, a woman instructing children in the cultivation of 'the Human Plant' and in the importance of tree to vine, is a useful approach to the educational symbolism in the frontispiece to Songs of Innocence." Wynne's frontispiece shows a boy holding a book under his arm and a woman standing with her arm round a girl and pointing towards the text supporting a vine. The lines beneath the text are the moral from Emblem 21 "Of Education":

This prudent care must rear the Youthful mind, 
By Love supported and with Toil refin'd, 
'Tis thus alone the Human Plant can rise, 
Unprun'd it droops, and Unsupported dies.

The frontispiece to Songs of Innocence has a woman seated with a book in her lap, two children at her knee, and a tree with an unidentifiable twining plant. Blake's sketch for this Notebook 55 shows the woman with one child. The standard image of Education in, for instance, Ripa's Iconologia has a seated woman teaching a child to read, and a young tree supported by a pale. There are, therefore, many pictures graphically closer to Blake's than Wynne's frontispiece (the closest I have seen being in J. B. Bouard's Iconologie [Parma: Philippe Carmignani, 1759], but I have no evidence that Blake knew this work).

To me the strongest evidence for supposing that Blake had seen Wynne's emblems seems to be the appearance in the illustration to the "Argument" of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell of the unsupported vine from Emblem 21, a detail which Erdman mentions elsewhere as belonging to the emblem tradition. Daphne as an emblem "Of Chastity" (Emblem 35) is a commonplace with little graphic variation. I can see no thematic reason for connecting Emblem 2, "Of Silence" (a nude man standing, hand to lips, before a pyramid and obelisk) with MHH 21, in spite of the visual coincidence. Pyramids are a standard symbol of the glories of this world (or, in Ripa, of the Glory of Princes). The traveller in "Of the Use of Self-Denial," Emblem 24, does not move "in the manner and direction" of Blake's in Notebook 15, and many another pilgrim is depicted dressed like Blake's traveller. Only the serpent around the leg of Wynne's figure seems a possible influence—on Drawing 13a.

There is an emblem graphically closer to the Notebook Emblem 4 (later GP 7) than Wynne's "Of Vain Pursuits." Wynne's picture is based on Emblem 22 of Bunyan's Divine Emblems: or Temporal Things Spiritualized. Fitted for The Use of Boys and Girls, entitled "Of the Boy and Butterfly," as Wynne's emblem is in his Contents list. The only significant difference is the one that establishes the connection with Blake: Wynne's boy has his hat on his head, whereas in the Bunyan emblem the boy is using a hat, like the Blake one, to chase the butterfly.

I should add that what I have said about the Education motif involves no criticism of Erdman's view that Blake was considering from early in the Notebook an emblem book for children—indeed Blake's work counters the current vogue for rationalistic, moralistic, educational books for children by offering a very different concept of education. Also interpretative conclusions about Songs of Paradise 7, based on the assumption that the small figures are personified butterflies, are in no way changed by my citation of a different source, especially since Bunyan's and Wynne's themes are the same.


2 This is the title of the illustrated editions of this work. The "9th edition," 1724, is the first extant one with illustrations, though the 3rd edition of 1703 was advertised as being "ornamented with cuts." This edition has crude ill­ustrations lacking in detail. The edition I have used for comparison with Wynne is the "10th edition," 1757. I have not yet located copies of the editions of 1732 and 1770 listed in CBEL.

Blake, Locke, & The Concept of "Generation"  
By James C. Evans

The concept of "generation" as a level of existence in Blake's poetry has been related to its use both in the Neoplatonists and in Swedenborg. In both instances, the term generally implies a world of generative being in a material sphere as opposed to a world of continuous being in a spiritual one. There is, however, another possible source as undeniably central in Blake's reactions to his philosophical milieu as any, John Locke's Essay on Human Understanding, and about which Blake stated he felt "the same Contempt and Abhorrence" from first reading it "when very Young" onwards.2

The particularly relevant passage in the Essay occurs amidst Locke's speculations about the perception of cause-effect relationships. Having defined a cause as that which operates to produce an idea or collection of ideas, he proceeds to divide effects into two categories. The first is "creation," an effect "wholly made new, so that no part thereof did ever exist before." The second category, however, is extremely interesting in the light it throws on Blake's choice of terms for a world barely human.

When a thing is made up of particles which did all of them before exist, but that very thing, so constituted of pre-existing particles which, considered all together, make up such a collection of simple ideas, had not any existence before as this man, this egg, rose, or cherry, etc. And this, when referred to a substance produced in the ordinary course of nature by an internal
principle, but set on work by and received from some external agent or cause, and working by insensible ways which we perceive not, we call "generation"... Thus, a man is generated... 5

Both the language and the concepts in this passage would indeed have been totally abhorrent to Blake, for Locke presents the generative principle in man as consisting of an "agent" working "insensibly" and uncomprehendingly on another "internal principle" and resulting in a unique configuration of "pre-existing particles." There is no better description of the Blakean state of generation than this sterile meeting of two forces seemingly without communication, without emotion and even without a conscious purpose, but merely following the "ordinary course of nature." It is, in fact, man's existence reduced to its absolute natural limits in which he is seen as a combination of "simple ideas," to use a Lockean term. Now, we know that Locke intended the passage as a neutral, objective description of simple cause and effect: sexual desire results in coitus which produces a human being made up of the atoms of the mother and father. But when Blake read it, it surely seemed to him to epitomize everything that is the exact opposite of man's unified Edenic existence in pure imaginative perception. He found a ready-made image with a ready-made title to describe "the barren waste of Locke and Newton," the "philosophy of five senses" into which the eighteenth century was securely "Locked" (Blake himself makes this pun in An Island in the Moon). So, the two words, Locke and generation, become closely associated in Blake's poetry, and both appear in conjunction with the image of looms, a mechanical form of creation which produces the veil of nature that must be rent at the apocalyptic moment. Locke, whose way of perceiving the world continually creates and sustains such generation, becomes synonymous with that state. In using the term generation, Blake gathers up the Lockean methodology in its own epitome, imbues it with his own symbolic meaning and turns it with the deftness of irony against its own source.

Nor is this the only instance of Blake ironically borrowing from Locke to illustrate the primary Lockean error. Quite obviously, the lines from "Auguries of Innocence," "We are led to Believe a Lie / when we see not Thro' the Eye," are at the heart of Blake's rebellion against the whole physical basis of eighteenth century science and philosophy. But a point generally missed is that Blake is ironically countering Locke's statement of faith in reason by quoting a phrase from that statement. Toward the end of his Essay, Locke enumerates various kinds of errors that have crept into philosophy and rounds the discussion off by prescribing the only guard against such error.

Light, true light in the mind, is or can be nothing else but the evidence of the truth of any proposition; and if it be not a self-evident proposition, all the light it has, or can have, is from the clearness and validity of those proofs upon which it is received. To talk of any other light in the understanding, is to put ourselves in the dark, or in the power of the prince of darkness, and, by our own consent, to give ourselves up to delusion, to believe a lie.4

Not only does Blake use the phrase "to believe a lie" in correcting Locke's premise that all we really know is sense data, but he follows this with Locke's own dark-light imagery: "God appears & God is Light / To Those poor Souls who dwell in Night, / But does a Human Form Display / To those who dwell in Realms of day" (11. 129-32). As with "generation," the trouble lies in Locke's perspective. In saying that we must use reason to determine whether [a revelation] be from God or no," Locke is placing a non-existent barrier between human and divine and binding himself to a severely limited view of the world. He fails to realize that "God is man & exists in us & we in Him." Against Locke's definition of generation both epitomizes such a narrow, physical, totally rational concept of man and perfectly describes the mental state of those who dwell in so circumscribed a world. This is the dual role which made Locke's work so inviting a quarry from which Blake could build his image of the fallen world.

4 Locke, Essay, II, 323. In this passage, Locke goes on to remark of divine revelation, "When he [God] illuminates the Mind with supernatural Light, he does not extinguish that which is natural... Reason must be our last Judge and Guide in all things... Conclusion we must and by it examine whether it be a Revelation from God or no... " (pp. 323-24). Surely Blake would have thought this the most pernicious of all lies.

The Catalogue of Blake's Designs Completed, & A Last-Minute Inclusion
By Martin Butlin

The typescript of the forthcoming catalogue of Blake's works in the visual arts has now been handed in to the Trianon Press, who are to publish it for the William Blake Trust, though it has not yet gone to the printer. Its scope is defined as the paintings, drawings and separate hand-colored designs of William Blake. Monochrome engravings and the illuminated books are not included, though the Small and Large Books of Designs from the books are. It has been difficult to draw absolutely precise lines of demarcation. Separate colored copies of engravings and plates from the illuminated books have been included when it seems likely that Blake himself disposed of them as individual works in their own right, but colored proofs of pages
still bearing lines of text, and hand-colored monochrome engravings issued in book form (e.g. the Job designs, the illustrations to Hayley’s Ballads and Triumph of Temper, and those to Young’s Night Thoughts) have been omitted. Proofs on which a considerable amount of work has been done in pencil or watercolor, such as three versions of the Europe title-page and the Job proofs with sketches for the designs in the margins, have been catalogued. Even within these somewhat arbitrary distinctions it is feared that some inconsistencies remain.

The catalogue numbers run to 886, plus eleven works attributed to Robert Blake and three to Catherine. This is not the full story, however, as sketchbooks and single projects like the watercolor illustrations to Young’s Night Thoughts are catalogued under a single number but are divided into sub-entries each with its own subsidiary number: 116, for instance, for Blake’s Notebook, and 537 for the Night Thoughts. In addition a number of individual drawings are drawn on both recto and verso. In all, therefore, over 2250 designs are catalogued. The arrangement is in roughly chronological groups, some fairly broadly defined, such as early drawings, some more unified, such as the Bible illustrations for Thomas Butts and the Dante illustrations for Linnell. Lost works recorded in such sources as William Rossetti’s lists in the 1863 and 1880 editions of Gilchrist’s Life of William Blake have been included in the hope that further examples may come to light; the tempera of “The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes,” recently sold from the Kerrison Preston collection, is an example of a work known only from Rossetti’s description until its reappearance at Sotheby’s in 1966.

Hitherto unrecorded works also continue to appear, and no doubt will continue to do so after it is too late to include them in the catalogue. The latest (illus. 1) is a typical early pen and wash drawing of c. 1780 of a battle scene, acquired last year by Thos. Agnew & Sons Ltd., in an album of mixed 18th and 19th-century drawings mainly British. The weapons, particularly the mace, and the helmets of some of the warriors suggest the Middle Ages. Both sides include horsemen as well as foot-soldiers; there is a mounted trumpeter on the left and a standard-bearer on the right. It has not been possible to identify the battle. Perhaps indeed it is a general representation of “War,” the subject of a number of works between 1784, when Blake exhibited “War unchained by an Angel. Fire, Pestilence, and Famine following” at the Royal Academy (see Blake Newsletter 25 [Summer 1973], pp. 4-8) and 1805, when Blake signed and dated the Boston Museum’s watercolor of “War,” a later version of “A Breach in the City, the Morning after the Battle,” another work exhibited in 1784; the new drawing is not, however, related in composition to any of these works. On the other hand it also has affinities with the series of illustrations to English history, most of which date from c. 1779 but of which Blake drew up a list of subjects in his Notebook as late as 1793.

Reviews

Reviewed by Edward J. Rose

It has been just over eighty years since Ellis and Yeats published their edition of Blake. That was the last time a book was produced that could be said to be remotely similar in scope to *The Illuminated Blake,* but actually there is no work in the critical literature on Blake like Erdman's most recent book. It is the kind of book that nobody but he would have attempted, and it is just as well that nobody but he did, because even Erdman has his problems, some of which are clearly unavoidable considering the difficulties inherent in the monumental task of reproducing every page of each one of the illuminated books while at the same time confining his annotations to a one-page-for-one-page ratio. Despite these difficulties, however, the magnitude of his achievement is strikingly impressive. *The Illuminated Blake* reproduces inexpensively and for the first time in one place all of Blake's illuminated works. The annotations, furthermore, make the material accessible not only to young scholars and beginning students but also to the general reader.

I have called attention to the Ellis-Yeats edition because of the illuminated poems that it reproduces rather than for its very different kind of commentary. Blake is no longer an unknown artist and Erdman has rightly seen his task as that of an annotator who no longer needs to argue for the recognition of his subject. The level of his discourse has struck a happy medium between that of the veteran Blake scholar and that of the writer whose main task is to introduce complicated material to readers who may be seeing most of it for the first time.

Besides the Ellis-Yeats edition there have been other editions, interpretive studies, facsimile editions, and semi-standardized editions (often facsimile types) of individual illuminated poems or particular picture series that may be said to bear some distant relation to *The Illuminated Blake.* Keynes's and Wicksteed's commentaries on *Jerusalem* and the *Songs,* for example, are probably more like Erdman's annotations than any other commentary in Blake criticism because they examine the two works page-by-page but do not attempt to exhaust their subject, although such an assertion may be debatable in the case of Wicksteed's *Jerusalem* commentary. Keynes's commentaries, like Erdman's, are strongly empirical, even if less speculative. But neither Keynes nor Wicksteed makes the effort that Erdman does to attend to the various details (pictorial and otherwise) on the individual page. Roe's study of the Dante illustrations, Bentley's edition of *Vala,* Damon's *Job* and its successors, and Irene Tayler's book on the Gray illustrations concentrate in great detail on a single work or series of designs, but they do reproduce material in direct conjunction with commentary. (There are, of course, several articles by John E. Grant, Irene Tayler, and me that also reproduce the whole of a series of pictures in conjunction with commentary.) Unlike *The Illuminated Blake,* none of these books and articles anthologizes. In fact, most of these studies are written essentially for the seasoned scholar who knows Blake's other works and can put the specific work involved in some kind of perspective, whereas *The Illuminated Blake* tries to present and comment upon all of the illuminated poems in one volume while trying, successfully I might add, to avoid connoisseur-like notes or the banal.

It is likely that *The Illuminated Blake* may become the standard and most functional introduction to the study of Blake as a poet-printer. Books like those of Blunt and Hagstrum serve an entirely different kind of purpose.

While the scope of *The Illuminated Blake* makes it a unique book, the simplicity of its plan and organization is what will make it useful. Erdman reproduces Blake's illuminated works chronologically, most often in actual size but sometimes reduced. *America* and *Europe* are reduced only slightly, but *The Song of Los, The Book of Ahania,* *The Book of Los,* and *Jerusalem* (except for pl. 100) considerably. Rarely are the smaller dimensions responsible for the loss of clarity to be observed in the margins and other areas of detail in many of the reproductions included in the volume. Furthermore, Erdman makes a noble effort throughout his annotations to sort out for the reader the salient differences between copies of a given illuminated poem. Because he charts the variations from copy to copy, the chances are good that he may forestall the more astigmatic interpretations that sometimes develop on the basis of only one or two copies. Such interpretations, unfortunately, have not been unknown in past years. Finally, the format of *The Illuminated Blake* is inspired. Because he has turned the book, thereby setting the commentary and the reproduced plate side-by-side on the same page, Erdman makes the reader's job of following his annotations less awkward than is ordinarily the case where detailed commentary accompanies pictures. All in all, the book is well designed.

In his Introduction Erdman raises two difficult points that all critics of Blake must confront if they intend to annotate pictures. These relate to the reading of the pictures and the description of color where the reproductions are in black-and-white, as they are in *The Illuminated Blake.* In the first point, Erdman remarks that "Blake's pictures are never full translations of the text. And these notes attend to the text only as it relates to the pictures . . . . Even when I seem to be telling 'the story of the pictures,' it should not be supposed that a story of the poem would be the same or even have the same plot. When I have introduced, as a way to present the meanings of
the pictures, a synopsis of a whole illuminated poem, it should be tested against one's own full experience of the text and pictures, separately and together" (p. 14). This is a necessary compromise, of course, but it leads unavoidably to various imbalances in the annotations. It does invite the reader to read attentively and critically. The imbalances appear because sometimes the commentary is descriptive (almost exclusively) whereas at other times it is largely interpretive. Color is even more difficult to deal with, and while Erdman does a good job so far as consistency is concerned, his descriptions are impossible to keep in one's mind, even though he tries earnestly to simplify them. I have come to the opinion myself that any attempt to say this object is red (what kind of red?) and that object is blue (what kind of blue?) is as frustrating to the writer as to the reader. Furthermore, neither writer nor reader can consistently visualize or remember the colors (their tints and shades) with only the black-and-white as a guide. Finding verbal equivalents while looking at the color plates themselves is difficult enough. The chaos begins when the viewer moves from plate-to-plate and then copy-to-copy. Trying to recreate the visual impact of a colored plate through verbal equivalents is worse than writing program notes for Bach and Mozart. Nevertheless, in a volume of this sort some reference to color is necessary because it is part of the job of sorting the differences between copies of one poem. It also underscores Blake's instinctive antipathy for sameness or monotony, which as Erdman observes, "Blake loathed."

Erdman's chronological survey begins with the All Religions are One and There is No Natural Religion plates. And while the annotations are largely right on the mark, one wonders if some of these plates should not have been enlarged after the fashion of the two enlargements Erdman does make for two of the plates from The Gates of Paradise. And although Erdman assumes "that every graphic image in Blake's illuminations has its seed or root in the poetry" and that "A failure to find the textual referent is a failure to see something that is there" (a principle which I have never fully accepted), Erdman does not say all that much in his annotations to All Religions are One and There is No Natural Religion about the relation of the text to the accompanying designs; that is, he makes little attempt to account for their suitability or their being there at all. The random references to the illustrations Blake made for the Night Thoughts often omit obvious parallels (more to the point than some that are cited), for example, the woman, child, and bird in There is No Natural Religion as in series Two and Night Thoughts. Erdman is also misled by凫es by other critics. The palm (annotations to All Religions are One, 5) rather than simply "a traditional emblem of immortality and resiliency" which "may ... symbolize the continual renewal of the same basic forms in nature" (Essick)" is, instead, traditionally the symbol of victory. This meaning, which is Roman in origin, became in Christian symbolism representative of the triumph of the martyr over death. The palm tree is specifically associated with St. Christopher, who used the tree as a staff on his pilgrimages. According to one legend, after bearing the young Christ (see Songs 28) across a river, he drove it into the earth where it took root (see All Religions are One, 7 and, by the way, Night Thoughts 68).

The narrative tendency of much of the commentary is often tiresome, although probably unavoidable in a book of this sort. Even in his commentary on the Songs, Erdman's text tends to narrate rather than concentrate on deep-down interpretive analysis and much of his narration is obvious. Blake was an intensely intellectual man and not a story-teller. This reviewer would have preferred less emphasis on the story line because the concentration on the narrative elements does not tell us what Blake is trying to achieve either on a given page or in the illuminated poem as a whole.

Erdman has problems with his bird identifications, so much so that any veteran birdwatcher is likely to cry out raucously at such identifications as those made on pages 124, 131, or 173. It is, of course, difficult to gauge Blake's intentions or, perhaps, to assess honestly his skill at bird drawing, but whatever kind of birds these are, they are either not ravens and eagles or not very well drawn ravens or eagles.

Erdman tries to establish a distinction between the serpent and riding children on Thel 6 and America 11, but no such distinction is tenable, at least pictorially, despite what one might say of the relation of the design to the texts of the two poems. Also, in his discussion of the Songs, Erdman says some strange things. For example, when discussing the frontispiece to the Songs of Innocence (p. 43), he describes the cloud as a "cloud-blanket." Why? It is clearly a cloud and not a blanket or a blanket of clouds. Then he speaks of the "nakedly dressed bard or piper." While nakedly dressed is less than an adequate description and not in the least unusual in Blake's work, the figure is clearly a piper, since he carries a pipe. It is disappointing to read this kind of unnecessarily indecisive description of the obvious (there are enough details in Blake's pictures where it is almost impossible to be decisive), and then read such a fine passage as that on the "Holy Thursday" poem in Innocence (p. 60): "That this richly embroidered title and twelve lines are what Blake makes of the street between them is suggested by a whiff of smoky flame. ..." This is the way to look at a Blake page. The reader wonders then why Erdman writes about page 2 of "Night" (p. 62) as follows: "The text displaces [my italics] the foliage of a tall oak (to guess from the leaves). ... While it is perhaps debatable whether the tree is an oak or not, the point is that the words of the poem are the leaves. Erdman still does not make this kind of pictorial metaphor clear on p. 80 (Songs of Los, 7) and misses it altogether in "The Clod & the Pebble" picture when he repeats in his own way the food-chain nonsense of earlier criticism. This is a brilliant design that has yet to find a commentator equal to it.
The reader wonders again what happened to Isaiah in the discussion of "The Little Girl Unbound" poem in the *Songs of Experience* (p. 78) and the less than satisfying extrapolation of the butterfly cycle in "The Sick Rose" commentary. Omissions of this sort make the reader restless, and while he understands that some are caused by the limitations of space, he cannot understand why more is not said when the pages are not full. Page 11 is a case in point. Nothing is said of the Pegasus motif (mentioned elsewhere) or the relation between the design at the top of *MHH* 14 and the picture of the Elohim Creating Adam (see also *Night Thoughts* 12). There are many unfilled pages.

The illustration at the bottom of *MHH* 15 (p. 112), rather than having much to do with the plumed serpent, should be compared to the traditional emblem of the serpent and eagle in combat, which extends from the Persians and Greeks to Shelley (see *Freemasonry Unbound* and *The Revolt of Islam*, canto 1) and Nietzsche (see Zarathustra's Prologue). There is a helpful article by Rudolf Wittkower in the *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, vol. 2 (1938-39), pp. 293-325, entitled "Eagle and Serpent, A Study in the Migration of Symbols."

It strikes me that the interpretation placed by Erdman on the "bareness" of the lettering on *MHH* 18 (p. 115) is fanciful. I feel this way about many of the squiggles on many of the pages. Rather than serpents, worms, or coils of communication, they are simply just squiggles. By "just" I mean they are decorative or wholly pictorial and do not have symbolic or verbal significance. I think also that while our modern eyes see Jew and African as Londoners, as Erdman's do, Blake was addressing himself, in fact, to three, not two, classes: Jew, African, and Londoner (see *MHH* 26, p. 133).

There is no doubt that the monster at the top of *America* 4 (p. 142) is a basilisk, as Kathleen Raine suggests, and it is, indeed identifiable in some ways with Orc, but the reasons for that are that the basilisk is half-cock and half-snake. This is, by the way, the plumed serpent—hence Orc. In early Christian symbolism the basilisk was often associated with the Antichrist or the dark power. The dragon, lion, adder, and basilisk symbolized in demonic parody the four beasts of Revelation. They certainly were so interpreted by St. Augustine and other early Church fathers.

It is impossible, of course, to say everything in a volume of this sort, but there are many curious omissions involving pointed cross-references and important observations. I have already suggested a few, but here are some others: *NNR* al (p. 27) should be compared to the *Paradise Lost* and *Comus* pictures; some comment is called for on the Wicksteed annunciation-reading of "Infant Joy" (p. 66); the cloud-rider in the "Introduction" to *Songs of Experience* should be compared to the child cloud-rider in the "Introduction" to *Songs of Innocence;* "The Human Abstract" Urizen-figure (p. 99) should be compared with the figure of Urizen on *BU* 28 (p. 210). The poison tree figure recurs pictorially throughout Blake's work, including the *Night Thoughts,* but no comment is made (p. 91); the serpent-leviathan on *MHH* 20 (p. 117) should be compared to the one in the Job illustrations; *MHH* 24 (p. 121) bears comparison not only with the famous color print of Nebuchadnezzar but with *Night Thoughts* 299. *VDA* i (p. 125) is indeed a large face; Blake does this elsewhere, but there is no comment. *VDA* ii (pp. 126-27): the title page commentary misses the rainbow parody of the cave and, most important, *Night Thoughts* 91, A 1 (p. 139); this is a pictionalization of the human abstract tree described in that song and should be so noted; the design on A 2 (p. 140) should be compared with designs in *The Gates of Paradise* and *Night Thoughts* 13. *SL* 1 (p. 174) should be compared with *BU* 17 (p. 199). *BU* 9 (p. 191) should be compared with *GP* 3 (p. 270) and my old association of the *GP* figures with the four Zoas (see "The Structure of Jerusalem"); some comment is needed on the modified embryo or fetal position taken by the figure on *BU* 16 (p. 198) in comparison with *BU* 8 (see also *BU* 22); for another lion not unlike that on *BU* 23, considering what we can see of him, see *Night Thoughts* 25. Picture traditions, such as that of St. Jerome, do not always have verbal equivalents. Is Urizen a kind of St. Jerome? Considering the fact that Erdman poses many questions (perhaps too many), I guess I am entitled to one of my own. The discussion of *M* 2 (p. 218) calls for a comment on other Blakean comets, such as the one on *Night Thoughts* 149; the commentary on *M* 19 (p. 235) cries out for a comparison between the three wives and three daughters shown here and those who are to be seen on *L'Allegro* 6 and *Il Penseroso* 12.

Erdman's vision of a little Blake scrambling around in the margins of the *Milton* plates has never seemed altogether convincing to me, at least not in most cases. The feature-less figure in the top right margin of *M* 23 is a case in point, but there are many others. It is not that Blake was above cartooning (or even doodling) in the modern sense, but that the selection of certain figures in the margins as William or Catherine Blake is often simply arbitrary. Many marginal definitions like the "flat dark hand with spread fingers" that is supposed to be growing out of a vine in the lower right margin of *M* 44 (p. 260) are not only purely speculative, but essentially meaningless when noted without interpretive comment or without being placed in some kind of context.

What Erdman takes for a "black" penis on *M* 32 (there are other debatable observations of a similar kind) is perhaps pubic hair and certainly shadowing or shading. In his discussion of *M* 36 (p. 252), which is generally sound and even impressive, Erdman again overlooks the shading and thus sees only circles instead of globes. The diagram is not one-dimensional any more than are the drawings of William and Robert Blake. The globes are shaded so as to indicate their spherical shape. Perhaps the way to visualize *M* 36 is to see it after the fashion of an atomic model in which the various neutrons and protons are strung together.
Erdman notes the Cerberus that confronts the pilgrim, Milton, on M 46 (p. 262). We get a better view of him in the illustrations to Paradise Lost. The serpent-rooster Erdman sees is, of course, another version of the basilisk whose components are clearly seen here. The scene is Dantesque and could well illustrate "The Mental Traveller." Similarly the cruciform emanation and somewhat serpentine wheat men on M 50 recall vaguely the caduceus (at least pictorially) and certainly point at a vegetative harvest. At the end of Milton Blake had not yet transfigured the harvest into a mental or aesthetic act. I am not sure that much that has been said about the illustration on M 50 is really to the point. At any rate, more needs to be said in detail about the figures and the relation of the final design to the poem as a whole.

GP 2, 3, 4, and 5 should be compared to the Zoa and GP 1 to the butterfly cycle and/or J 2 where Erdman does refer to GP 1. I think also that Erdman partly misreads GP 19, the illustration of which can be compared to several flying and bat-devils in Blake's work from the serpent-Satan of the Paradise Lost designs to J 6 and the Job illustrations. My point, however, is that Blake would have never believed that Satan who is the God of this World could be a "better help than no dreams at all," even "for temporarily lost travellers." (See my Explicator reply of January 1964, vol. 22:8).

As I have said elsewhere, what we see on the first plate of Jerusalem is Blake-Los entering his own poem: the Jerusalem that he builds in England's green and pleasant land and amidst those dark satanic mills about which he writes at the beginning of Milton. The door on plate 1 of Jerusalem may also be found in several of the Night Thoughts illustrations.

It is difficult to cover all the ins and outs of Erdman's commentary on Jerusalem. For example, while he could have said much more about J 14, J 15 is a model of pointed clarity and brevity. His discussion of plate 2 of Jerusalem is essentially sound, but could benefit from a forward look at plates 92 and 96 where all traces of Jerusalem's insect life have disappeared, a forward look at J 64 and Night Thoughts 7, which Erdman quite rightly emphasizes. The figure on J 67 is obviously stretched out on a kind of rack, but what is more interesting is that the chains are carried over from J 65, a technique that Blake often employs. For example, J 25 should be brought forward into the discussion of J 69. The two plates are intimately related because of the sacrificial orgy that is celebrated on both pages.

I do not think the discussion of the swan on J 71 goes well with the discussion of J 11, and the discussion of J 72 is very disappointing because it fails to extrapolate on J 54. The same could be said of J 74, J 71, and J 63. The discussion of J 75 unfortunately does not relate the picture of the seven-headed, ten-horned (sometimes seven-crowned) dragon and whore to several of Blake's watercolors for the Book of Revelation, including Night Thoughts 345 and, perhaps, J 50.

The commentary on J 77 could well be expanded. There is space, which is not the case in the discussions of several of the important plates between J 92 and J 100, but little more than the obvious is recorded. Also, the somewhat comic anticipation of Rodin's famous thinker on J 78 may have overtones not included in Erdman's commentary. The cock, while a component of the basilisk is, after all, a symbol of Christ. There is a connection, therefore, between J 78 and J 42, since it is about the best example of the figura serpentina in Blake's work. In fact, one of the weaknesses of The Illuminated Blake is its failure to take compositional, purely pictorial, and strictly decorative effects into account.

So far as J 54 is concerned, the four heads are more likely to be understood as those of the four Zoas than just four rocky fragments. That is, they are the four Zoas that are to be found buried in every man. That they are the Zoas is even more obvious on J 92, where Erdman finally speculates on this possibility. They are also, of course, pity, wrath, reason, and desire.

The little figure on J 62 may be Blake, but could easily be (as in Milton) a surrogate for the reader, confronted here by the body-text. As I pointed out, the phrase "Eyed as the Peacock" (literal and imaginative as it is) describes an eye for every pore, a visionary skin that unites feeling with sight. J 62 suggests the opposite, even the mockery, of infinite-eye vision distributed all over the body. The kind of Indian headdress worn by Albion-Enceladus (see Melville's Pierre) crowns the visualization of the engraven man, that is, Samson who has made a sepulchre of himself--a sun-son unable to rise from his earth-tomb-body he has sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly fashioned in accordance with his nightmarish introspections.

The employment of the worm in J 63, especially at the loins (the place of the last judgment), invites comparison with the Elohim Creating Adam and the Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun (the version in the Brooklyn Museum), although such a comparison is perhaps not as striking as the relation between J 64 and Night Thoughts 7, which Erdman quite rightly emphasizes. The figure on J 67 is obviously stretched out on a kind of rack, but what is more interesting is that the chains are carried over from J 65, a technique that Blake often employs. For example, J 25 should be brought forward into the discussion of J 69. The two plates are intimately related because of the sacrificial orgy that is celebrated on both pages.
be helpful for Erdman to have explained the technical rudiments of Blake's printing process. Such an explanation belongs in a volume of this sort because it answers fundamental questions about how Blake produced the plates.

It is to be hoped that The Illuminated Blake will go into either a second printing or, better, a second edition so that Erdman will get a chance to rectify or, at least, modify various passages, not to mention the typographical errors. Let us hope that his publisher is listening. Some of the photographic reproduction work should be redone. The book is too good to be so badly served as it sometimes is by lapses in production. Always formidable, often brilliant, sometimes uneven and unnecessarily obscure, The Illuminated Blake is an invaluable contribution to Blake studies. It is unfortunate that Erdman does not resort more vigorously and judiciously to the critical literature on Blake. He seems at times to cite only what he happens to remember, but perhaps this is a niggling point; for, while there are many minor points with which to take issue throughout the volume, there are no major blunders. The Illuminated Blake is an astonishingly successful book on the whole.

One of the great values of The Illuminated Blake is that it will provoke close study and detailed comment on Blake's illuminated poems. Let us hope that comment will be imaginative and illuminating. Erdman's book will also show the new reader and remind the old that Blake was a pictorial artist and that it is a mistake to treat him only as a conventional poet.

It is doubtful that anyone except those who can do without The Illuminated Blake will be able to make the best use of the whole of it, but that is true of most books. It will quite naturally serve those best who do not really need it, since it will be used most often as a memory stimulator by those who already know the originals (as well as the Trianon facsimiles) or have easy access to a representative number of them. Its effect on the serious student or neophyte Blake scholar will probably be mixed. Of course, the good it will do will far outweigh the bad. Despite the fact that it cannot always be read without a regular printed text (except, perhaps, as Erdman recommends, with a magnifying glass), the beginning reader of Blake will get a good sense of what the thrust of a real Blakean page is.

Some of the reproductions in The Illuminated Blake are not easily decipherable, so that if the reader really wants to follow Erdman in detail, he will have to have better reproductions than many of those that are included in this volume, but Blake is not always easy to reproduce. It speak in the main of the interlinear and marginal areas of representative pages. If the reader depends only on the reproductions in The Illuminated Blake, he will often have to take Erdman's word for it, not because his interpretation may differ, but because he simply cannot make out the details that Erdman says are there.

The information on pp. 14, 15, and 21 in the Introduction, it seems to me, should be given in greater detail. Furthermore, it belongs with the information on pp. 8-9. The asterisk which appears often in the annotations is never identified, so far as I can discover. It also would have been helpful for Erdman to have explained the technical rudiments of Blake's printing process. Such an explanation belongs in a volume of this sort because it answers fundamental questions about how Blake produced the plates.

It is to be hoped that The Illuminated Blake will go into either a second printing or, better, a second edition so that Erdman will get a chance to rectify or, at least, modify various passages, not to mention the typographical errors. Let us hope that his publisher is listening. Some of the photographic reproduction work should be redone. The book is too good to be so badly served as it sometimes is by lapses in production. Always formidable, often brilliant, sometimes uneven and unnecessarily obscure, The Illuminated Blake is an invaluable contribution to Blake studies. It is unfortunate that Erdman does not resort more vigorously and judiciously to the critical literature on Blake. He seems at times to cite only what he happens to remember, but perhaps this is a niggling point; for, while there are many minor points with which to take issue throughout the volume, there are no major blunders. The Illuminated Blake is an astonishingly successful book on the whole.

Martin K. Nurmi. William Blake. London: Hutchinson University Library, 1975. Pp. 175, 8 illus. $1.95, paper. Reviewed by Paul M. Zall Those who have long since despaired of keeping a body count in Blake studies will be cheered by the appearance of a Blake volume in Hutchinson's series for students and general readers. The focal point is Blake's poetry, however, abstracted from his art ("it has not been possible to give much attention to his art"), and for that reason alone will probably cause consternation among Blake camps of whatever critical persuasion. But this is a book for beginners, and should be greeted accordingly, with all due allowance for puns ("a Woman of Experience") and topicality ("Blake was not a male chauvinist").

The overview in this respect is very good, with an introductory chapter enticing beginners with visions of good things to come ("as we shall see later") and a biographical summary that gives much Blake in brief compass. Successive chapters then lead through the early verse--stressing the metrics in Poetical Sketches, then the philosophical countersystem in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell--gradually snaking through Blake's more complicated mythic structures. While the seasoned Blakean may scoff from the trenches at the redundancy inherent in this method, it seems to fit the needs of new recruits.

Of course the method risks the oversimplification of Cliff's Notes, but there is little of that here, except in a statement about The Four Zoas, being "one of the very greatest works of literature" (p. 26)--alas not demonstrated in the introductory chapter in which it appears nor in the ultimate chapter where the poem is discussed in detail and the aid of both Erdman and Frye is invoked. Or in the discussion of The Tyger," plateless, where after four pages of possibilities we are given a series of questions asserted to be logically unanswerable--with no suggestion that logic is not the only way to answer them. Or in the discussion of The Marriage, where the student and...
general reader meet Blakean irony without being sure about the difference between the satire of "Island in the Moon" and the irony here or later--the name seems the same, but sometimes refers to techniques like parody, now to theme, later to mode of perception, a multisensory device where the plate shows one thing and the poem another, and finally to "mythic irony" (p. 100). But this is to quibble.

Given the restrictions under which the labor was performed, its real strength appears in the masterful explanation of *Uvrizen*, where the action is made to appear truly dramatic and the subject made clearly the mind of Man. Sometimes the explanation of other plots comes cluttered with roll calls of commentators which seem superfluous since their names appear in the notes anyway. The real weakness, however, is the lack of a clear-cut conclusion to match the introductory chapters. The student and general reader are taken to Jerusalem and left suspended there--hanging by the thumbs as it were. Having been led from *Poetical Sketches* to this loftiest of heights, it would be nice to look back at the trackless wastes behind us and ahead. The "Suggestions for Further Reading" seem sparse enough, the "Criticism" list very heavy on collections of essays at the expense of individual studies. And the index tells us something about the current state of Blake studies when it lists Franklin P. Adams (FPA) but not Hazard S.


Reviewed by David Wagenknecht

Taken one observation at a time, Brian John's *Supreme Fictions* is intelligent and right-minded, but it is one of those studies of which the modesty and sanity are undone by scope. Such a range demands that one simultaneously manage general perspective as well as interpretive detail; this book, decent as it is, seemed to me neither out far nor in deep. The intention, for one thing, is rather uneasily divided between historical and critical implication: the reader must suspend himself between (on the one hand) landscapes of likemindedness so misty and general that the only distinct observations can be exceptions, and (on the other) specific interpretive patches which illustrate the author's admiration for his subjects more than these subjects' relationship to the larger view. Given the quality of the author's intelligence and the genuineness of his affections, this is a pity.

On the one hand John wants to argue for a Romantic "vitalist" tradition (stressing characteristic imagery more than his subjects' rhetorical relationship to historically conditioned audiences), but he is not very curious about Romanticism as an historical phenomenon, and neither the provenance nor the transference of the ideas and imagery he is concerned with interests him. Consequently the reader feels himself to be dealing less with a tradition than with four quite distinct expositions of similar ideas, and his first impression that the argument will have vast scope is replaced by a feeling of arbitrariness. Not only are we not told sufficiently why author X belongs (in the tradition designated), why not author Y: we are left finally with no very developed sense of the ways in which John's chosen (and unruly) four might be related--they simply often sound alike, which is not enough point to unify the discussion. Indeed, the idea of tradition is most active in the study by negative implication, for John is often anxious because ideas which are "good" in one context (usually Blake, but often Lawrence as well) are undesirable in another (Carlyle, sometimes Yeats). The word "fascist" recurs often enough to make one uncomfortable, but it is exactly the book's undeveloped sense of history which makes the anxiety unsolvable.

The book's potential for an interpretive dimension is reflected in the title, determined by an interest in Romantic projection, but this too is swallowed up by mere exposition of ideas. There is no shortage of specific commentary in the book, but the relentlessly expository method stands far enough outside the texts that no sense of the competition between imagination and reality convincing enough to support the title emerges. The Carlyle chapter is probably the least convincing in this regard--the concluding third of it rather desperately announces a critical dimension, arguing that the sage was a literary fictionist as much as prophetic factualist (the demonstration bogs down in impressionistic appreciations of style) but the Blake chapter may be taken as more characteristic. As a whole the chapter is a worthy general introduction to Blake's poetry (though very thin on the epics), but John decides to concentrate on Milton for reasons which have little to do with his general argument (it is the "shortest" as well as the "most 'finished'" epic, we are told), and the commentary manages to avoid nearly all the troubling minute particulars of the poem. Even on the level of general commentary it tells us nothing new. There is an attractive enthusiasm to the discussion, but--like the book as a whole--it implicitly begs more questions than it explicitly answers.